

Wednesday, February 11, 2004

Weather team helps put steel on target



Spc. Kate Waters meteorological (MET) crewmember, assigned to the 1st Armored Division Artillery Combat Team (DCT), prepares a weather balloon during a recent MET mission to gather weather data for various field artillery positions around Baghdad.

By Staff Sgt. Mark Bell, 372nd MPAD

CAMP STEEL FALCON, Iraq - For three soldiers, having one of the Army's smallest military occupational skills (MOS), and to some, probably the most unknown job supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, can be frustrating and rewarding at the same time.

Whether it's the early-morning hours or working by only feel and touch in the late hours of southern Baghdad's muddy forward operating base of the Task Force 1st Armored Division, the three-soldier meteorological (MET) team is on call 24-hours a day to provide vital weather data.

Their predictions allow howitzer and mortar gun teams to provide deadly accurate counter-fire missions against the enemy responsible for mortar or rocket attacks against coalition forces and Iraqi residents in and around Baghdad.

Spc. Takeisha M. Hoy, a field artillery MET crewmember, launches a weather balloon filled with helium which carries a compact weather station called a radio sonde. It slowly travels into the atmosphere reaching altitudes near 15,000 feet above ground level.

As the balloon disappears into the darkness with only a small chemical light to track its location, the small motors of the radio directional finder keep the system pointed in the right direction.

Using radio waves, the high-tech tracking system continually gathers and records important weather data

as it disappears through earth's different layers of atmosphere, Hoy said.

"During its ascent, the sonde relays the data back to the radio directional finder until the balloon pops," she said. "We are then able to quickly transmit that data to units that need it."

Using tactical radios, the data is sent across Baghdad -- data that will allow coalition forces to accurately shoot their guns if needed.

For the past two-and-a-half years, Hoy and Spc. Kate Waters have been providing weather data for field artillery units in Germany and Iraq.

"It was an unknown MOS and sounded interesting when I joined the Army," Waters said. "I had to make a quick decision and didn't have many options, so I took a chance with this MOS."

Although her work is mostly unseen to the big and small artillery gunners of 1st Armored Division, Waters said her job is just as important as the Soldiers putting the rounds in the tubes.

"MET provides the guns the ability to adjust to the wind speed and direction, air temperature and pressure," she said.

Together with the use of aiming circles, survey points, and accurate target and gun data, MET is a combat multiplier to the field artillery, said to Sgt. 1st Class David Whitaker, the DCT fire support sergeant.

"It's a device we use to ensure that we send accurate rounds down range," he said. "Basically, we're going to hit the target when we use MET."

Together with the weight and speed of the projectile, the trajectory of the howitzer, air density and wind speed all affect where a round lands, he said. The smaller the projectile, the more vital MET data becomes.

"Especially with the mortars, it's a lighter projectile which is definitely more affected by the weather," he said. "(The data is) a must have for firing live ammunition."

The MET team provides weather data every four hours for use by mortar men and artillerymen across Baghdad, he said.

"The MET team here is really good at what they do," Whitaker said. "I have the most confidence in their ability to provide the brigade with accurate weather data."

With the entire division relying on the DCT MET data, both Hoy and Waters said their job is critical to the fight against terrorism.

"We may not be firing the guns, but we are there providing them data to deliver those rounds," said Waters. "Without us, there would be no firing."

NEWS

50 Die in Truck Bombing South of Baghdad

ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq (AP) - A truck packed with an estimated 500 pounds of explosives blew up Tuesday morning at a police station south of Baghdad as dozens of would-be recruits lined up to apply for jobs, and a hospital official said at least 50 people were killed and 50 others wounded. It was at least the eighth vehicle bombing in Iraq this year and followed warnings from occupation officials that insurgents would step up attacks against Iraqis who work with the U.S.-led coalition, especially ahead of the planned June 30 transfer of sovereignty to a provisional Iraqi government.

White House Releases Bush Military Record

WASHINGTON (AP) - The White House, facing election-year questions about President Bush's military service, released pay records and other information Tuesday that it said supports Bush's assertion that he fulfilled his duty as a member of the Air National Guard during the Vietnam war. The material included annual retirement point summaries and pay records to show that Bush served.

Tests Confirm Bird Flu on 2nd Del. Farm

DOVER, Del. (AP) - Tests confirmed avian flu on a second central Delaware farm, a surprise that creates a "serious situation" for the region's poultry industry, state agriculture officials announced Tuesday. The discovery was sure to hurt efforts to lift bans by foreign countries on imports of U.S. poultry that were instituted in the past week.

Democrats Close Out Southern Campaigns

Sen. John Kerry and his Democratic pursuers closed out their campaigns in primaries in Virginia and Tennessee on Tuesday, the front-runner hoping for his victory in the South while Sen. John Edwards and retired Gen. Wesley Clark sought upsets to prolong the race. "Feeling good about today," Kerry told patrons at a diner in Memphis. "We want to do well down here."

Aide Testifies That Stewart Altered Log

NEW YORK (AP) - Martha Stewart altered a log of a phone message left by her stockbroker about ImClone Systems stock, then ordered her assistant to change it back, the assistant testified Tuesday. Stewart sat down at the assistant's desk and changed the message from "Peter Bacanovic thinks ImClone is going to start trading downward" to "Peter Bacanovic re ImClone," assistant Ann Armstrong testified.

French Lawmakers OK Religious Apparel Ban

PARIS (AP) - France's lower house of parliament voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to ban students from wearing Islamic head scarves and other religious apparel in public schools. The classroom ban, which also applies to Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses, was approved 494-36. In early March, the measure will go to the Senate, where there is little opposition.

In other news...

Two Thirds of Employees Enjoy Work Romance - Survey

LONDON (Reuters) - Whether it's a frisson by the filing cabinet, a gaze over bar graphs or hot flushes at the water-cooler, romance blossoms in the workplace for nearly two thirds of British employees, according to a survey.

Yet office love reduces productivity, with half of coupled-up colleagues admitting their work suffers as a result, according to the "Work-Love Balance" survey Monday.

Rather than focusing on the photocopying, three in ten people said they had "enjoyed physical intimacy" in their workplace, citing the lift and stairwell as the most expedient locations.

Despite the naughty nurse stereotype, health care and medical workers are the least likely to indulge in work romances, while the leisure and tourism industry is a libidinous hotbed which ensnares eight out of ten employees, the survey found.

Employment law and human resources consultants Human and Legal Resources, who carried out the survey among 1072 workers last month, said long working fostered romance.

"We spend the majority of our time at work; we work in close-knit teams with like-minded people. No wonder, then, that the camaraderie and teamwork that employers actively encourage among their employees so often blossoms into something deeper."

Finnish Police Give Record Speeding Fine

HELSINKI, Finland (AP) - Police gave a record \$216,900 speeding ticket to a millionaire under a system in which traffic fines are linked to an offender's income. The *Ilta-Sanomat* tabloid reported that millionaire Jussi Salonoja zoomed through the city center last weekend in a 25 mph zone and police handed him a ticket of \$216,900. It didn't say what his speed was.

76ers Replace Ayers With Assistant Ford

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Randy Ayers was fired by the struggling Philadelphia 76ers during his first season as their coach, and assistant Chris Ford was promoted to replace him Tuesday. Philadelphia went 21-31 under Ayers and is 1 1/2 games behind the Boston Celtics for the final playoff berth in the Eastern Conference.

Thought for the day...

How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these.

--George Washington Carver

Today in History...

February 11, 1945: YALTA CONFERENCE ENDS

(HISTORYCHANNEL.COM) On February 11, 1945, a week of intensive bargaining by the leaders of the three major Allied powers ends in Yalta, a Soviet resort town on the Black Sea. It was the second conference of the "Big Three" Allied leaders--U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin--and the war had progressed mightily since their last meeting, which had taken place in Tehran in late 1943.

What was then called the Crimea conference was held at the old summer palace of Czar Nicholas II on the outskirts of Yalta, now a city in the independent Ukraine. With victory over Germany three months away, Churchill and Stalin were more intent on dividing Europe into zones of political influence than in addressing military considerations. Germany would be divided into four zones of occupation administered by the three major powers and France and was to be thoroughly demilitarized and its war criminals brought to trial. The Soviets were to administer those European countries they liberated but promised to hold free elections. The British and Americans would oversee the transition to democracy in countries such as Italy, Austria, and Greece.

Final plans were made for the establishment of the United Nations, and a charter conference was scheduled to begin in San Francisco in April.

A frail President Roosevelt, two months from his death, concentrated his efforts on gaining Soviet support for the U.S. war effort against Japan. The secret U.S. atomic bomb project had not yet tested a weapon, and it was estimated that an amphibious attack against Japan could cost hundreds of thousands of American lives. After being assured of an occupation zone in Korea, and possession of Sakhalin Island and other territories historically disputed between Russia and Japan, Stalin agreed to enter the Pacific War within two to three months of Germany's surrender.

Most of the Yalta accords remained secret until after World War II, and the items that were revealed, such as Allied plans for Germany and the United Nations, were generally applauded. Roosevelt returned to the United States exhausted, and when he went to address the U.S. Congress on Yalta he was no longer strong enough to stand with the support of braces. In that speech, he called the conference "a turning point, I hope, in our history, and therefore in the history of the world." He would not live long enough, however, to see the iron curtain drop along the lines of division laid out at Yalta. In April, he traveled to his cottage in Warm Springs, Georgia, to rest and on April 12 died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

On July 16, the United States successfully tested an atomic bomb in the New Mexico desert. On August 6, it dropped one of these deadly weapons on Hiroshima, Japan. Two days later, true to its pledge at Yalta, the Soviet Union declared war against Japan. The next day, the United States dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki, and the Soviets launched a massive offensive against the Japanese in Manchuria. On August 15, the combination of the U.S. atomic attacks and the Soviet offensive forced a Japanese surrender. At the end of the month, U.S. troops landed in Japan unopposed.

When the full text of the Yalta agreements were released in the years following World War II, many criticized Roosevelt and Churchill for delivering Eastern Europe and North Korea into communist domination by conceding too much to Stalin at Yalta. The Soviets never allowed free elections in postwar Eastern Europe, and communist North Korea was sharply divided from its southern neighbor.

Eastern Europe, liberated and occupied by the Red Army, would have become Soviet satellites regardless of what had happened at Yalta. Because of the atomic bomb, however, Soviet assistance was not needed to defeat the Japanese. Without the Soviet invasion of the Japanese Empire in the last days of World War II, North Korea and various other Japanese-held territories that fell under Soviet control undoubtedly would have come under the sway of the United States. At Yalta, however, Roosevelt had no guarantee that the atomic bomb would work, and so he sought Soviet assistance in what was predicted to be the costly task of subduing Japan.

Stalin, more willing than Roosevelt to sacrifice troops in the hope of territorial gains, happily accommodated his American ally, and by the end of the war had considerably increased Soviet influence in East Asia.

The Old Ironsides Report

February 11, 2004

myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2004				As of: Tuesday, February 10, 2004 3:51:18 PM		
Start Time	SPORTS	ATLANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	Start Time
00:00	NBA - TORONTO RAPTORS @ PHOENIX SUNS		STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION : - RASCALS	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	THE NEWSHOUR	00:00
00:30				JUDGE JUDY		00:30
01:00		HEADLINE NEWS	TACTICAL TO PRACTICAL (EPS 1-13) : - HUMMERS, NIGHT VISION, AND GPS	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	BET NIGHTLY NEWS	01:00
01:25				GUIDING LIGHT		01:25
01:30		ESPNEWS			NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT	01:30
02:00		HEADLINE NEWS	SUICIDE MISSIONS : - SILENT WING WARRIORS		LARRY KING LIVE	02:00
02:13				GENERAL HOSPITAL		02:13
02:30	INSIDE THE NBA	HEADLINE NEWS				02:30
03:00	ESPNEWS	SESAME STREET	MURPHY'S ROMANCE	BABY LOONEY TUNES : - BRUCE BUNNY	NEWSNIGHT WITH AARON BROWN	03:00
03:30	TOTALLY NASCAR			THE ADVENTURES OF JIMMY NEUTRON, BOY GENIUS : - THE HAMSTER/PHANTOM OF RETROLAND		03:30
04:00	SPORTSCENTER	BOB THE BUILDER		A WALK IN YOUR SHOES	CNN LIVE	04:00
04:30		WHEEL OF FORTUNE		STRANGE DAYS AT BLAKE HOLSEY HIGH (YR. 1, EPS 1-13) (TV-7): - THURSDAY		04:30
05:00	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - BIG XII: COLORADO @ MISSOURI	THE DR. PHIL SHOW	ROCKET POWER : - ALL ABOUT SAM/ HALF TWISTER	JEOPARDY!	NIGHTLINE	05:00
05:30			THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	HEADLINE NEWS	YOUR CORPS	05:30
05:46		THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW				05:46
05:52				PACIFIC REPORT		05:52
06:00			THE SIMPSONS : - HOMER'S NIGHT OUT	ESPNEWS	HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS	06:00
06:30			THE COSBY SHOW : - FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL	HEADLINE NEWS		06:30
06:35		GUIDING LIGHT				06:35
06:52				PACIFIC REPORT		06:52
07:00	SPORTSCENTER		STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION : - RASCALS	THE PARKERS : - JOIN THE CLUB	THE O'REILLY FACTOR	07:00
07:17		GENERAL HOSPITAL				07:17
07:30				THE SIMPLE LIFE		07:30
08:00	NHL - NEW JERSEY DEVILS @ PHILADELPHIA FLYERS	HEADLINE NEWS	AMERICAN IDOL	EXTREME MAKEOVER : - PEGGY AND JENNIFER	CNN DAYBREAK	08:00
08:30		JUDGE JUDY				08:30
09:00		TODAY	TACTICAL TO PRACTICAL (EPS 1-13) : - HUMMERS, NIGHT VISION, AND GPS	THE OC : - THE RESCUE	GOOD MORNING AMERICA	09:00
10:00			SUICIDE MISSIONS : - SILENT WING WARRIORS	HEADLINE NEWS		10:00
10:22				PACIFIC REPORT		10:22
10:30	ESPNEWS			TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO		10:30
11:00	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - SEC: ALABAMA @ KENTUCKY	BABY LOONEY TUNES : - BRUCE BUNNY	MURPHY'S ROMANCE		HEADLINE NEWS	11:00
11:30		THE ADVENTURES OF JIMMY NEUTRON, BOY GENIUS : - THE HAMSTER/PHANTOM OF RETROLAND		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN	CHANNEL ONE	11:30
11:45					ABC WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING	11:45
12:00		A WALK IN YOUR SHOES			THE EARLY SHOW	12:00
12:30		STRANGE DAYS AT BLAKE HOLSEY HIGH (YR. 1, EPS 1-13) (TV-7): - THURSDAY		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD		12:30
13:00	SPORTSCENTER	JEOPARDY!	ROCKET POWER : - ALL ABOUT SAM/ HALF TWISTER	MEMPHIS BELLE		13:00
13:30		HEADLINE NEWS	THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS			13:30
14:00	COLLEGE GAMENIGHT	ESPNEWS	THE SIMPSONS : - HOMER'S NIGHT OUT		FOX NEWS LIVE	14:00
14:30	NBA FASTBREAK	HEADLINE NEWS	THE COSBY SHOW : - FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL			14:30
14:45				AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER		14:45
15:00	SPORTSCENTER	THE PARKERS : - JOIN THE CLUB	STAR TREK: NEXT GENERATION : - RASCALS		FOX NEWS LIVE	15:00
15:30		THE SIMPLE LIFE				15:30
16:00	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - BIG TEN: MICHIGAN STATE @ ILLINOIS	EXTREME MAKEOVER : - PEGGY AND JENNIFER	AMERICAN IDOL		FOX NEWS LIVE	16:00
17:00		THE OC : - THE RESCUE	TACTICAL TO PRACTICAL (EPS 1-13) : - HUMMERS, NIGHT VISION, AND GPS	ESPNEWS: THE HOT LIST	HEADLINE NEWS	17:00
17:30				HEADLINE NEWS	INSIDE POLITICS	17:30
18:00	THE HOT LIST	HEADLINE NEWS	SUICIDE MISSIONS : - SILENT WING WARRIORS	TODAY		18:00
18:30	THE HOT LIST	TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO			YOUR CORPS	18:30
19:00	AROUND THE HORN		MURPHY'S ROMANCE		LESTER HOLT LIVE	19:00
19:30	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN				19:30
20:00	SPORTSCENTER			SESAME STREET	HEADLINE NEWS	20:00
20:30		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD			NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	20:30
21:00	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - ACC: VIRGINIA @ DUKE	MEMPHIS BELLE	ROCKET POWER : - TWISTING AWAY/ SPOT REMOVER	BEAR IN THE BIG BLUE HOUSE : - THE WAY I FEEL TODAY	ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT	21:00
21:30			THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	WHEEL OF FORTUNE	CBS EVENING NEWS	21:30
22:00			THE SIMPSONS : - THE CREPES OF WRATH	THE DR. PHIL SHOW	CNBC: THE NEWS	22:00
22:30			THE COSBY SHOW : - THE JUICER			22:30
22:45		AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER				22:45
23:00	NBA - LOS ANGELES LAKERS @ HOUSTON ROCKETS		DHARMA & GREG : - PLAYING THE FIELD	THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW	HANNITY & COLMES	23:00
23:30			MY WIFE AND KIDS : - GRASSY KNOLL			23:30